TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE
WIP
WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Works In Progress

Established in 1990, by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition.

Resist the BIDding of the Olympia Downtown Association

by Pat Tassoni

Follow-up Inquiry into the ODA

Acting on the information that Beth Ward presented with her article, "An Inquiry into the ODA" [see page XX], which originally appeared in last month's issue of The Voice of Olympia, I reviewed the city files on neighborhood associations, specifically the Olympia Downtown Association. It is clear that the ODA does not meet the city's eligibility standard for classification as a neighborhood association because they have repeatedly violated the annual reporting requirements through the entirety of the city file, which dates back to 2002 (the 2004 report was absent from the file). And yet the city, in their love-affair with the ODA, gives them thousands of dollars year after year to the possible detriment of other neighborhood associations that received only partial funding or none at all from this limited resource.

Olympia Municipal Code 18.86.060(A) requires that neighborhood associations annually report on why 'renters or lessees' are not allowed in the organization and whether or not they are to be included in the future. The ODA does not grant FULL membership, including organizational voting rights, to rental residents. The ODA has not properly reported this condition to the city of Olympia year after year. This requirement is not too hard to understand as evidenced when another association referenced it in their application process. OMC 18.86.060(D) states essentially that the city needs to notify the offending neighborhood association, the ODA, of their non-compliance and possibly suspend them.

I believe that because of The Voice's intrepid inquiries, the city developed a new annual form (dated June 8, 2005) that dumbs-down the reporting process even further for neighborhood associations. At the time of this writing, the ODA still has not reported their exclusive membership. In the community's interest, the ODA should at the very least return all its ill-gotten funds from the city's Neighborhood Matching Grant program.

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The city should end its love affair with the ODA

Perhaps the Olympia Downtown Association is not an honest or capable corporate citizen as they claim or as the city of Olympia automatically gives them credit. They have been the instigators and proponents of anti-homeless and anti-youth legislation for nearly twenty years. And they are still pushing an agenda that needs to be examined even more closely now, given the reporting discrepancies detailed above. It's interesting to note that the current ODA president and main spokesperson, Jeff Kingsbury, and former spokesperson, Joe Hyer, are both running – thus far uncontested - for city council this year. I guess they want to supersize their discrepancies and further dilute the chain of command between the city and the ODA.

The Olympia Downtown Association is a non-profit corporation that works tirelessly for the profit of a few and, despite their rhetoric, are not necessarily community-minded. Only half of their current Board of Directors live in the city of Olympia. Their anti-homeless and anti-youth legislative initiatives have cost the city thousands of dollars to 'study' and have repeatedly divided an otherwise caring community.

The Olympia Downtown Association only represents a fraction of the estimated 540 businesses downtown with a current membership of 230, at least 20% of whom are associates without qualifying businesses downtown. A number of downtown businesses actively avoid the ODA.

Currently the ODA is at its historic high-water mark in membership but is now proposing mandatory membership of all businesses into what it claims is the next evolution: a Business Improvement District. A BID is a special tax district in which businesses or property owners downtown would decide to add an additional fee to their tax bill that they can decide to spend later. Nothing is stopping the ODA as a non-profit to raise and spend money voluntarily without creating a new taxing district except the likelihood that small businesses can't afford to contribute or may not voluntarily choose to be a member. But through business/asset bullying, all businesses downtown would be compelled to do their bidding.

The primary purpose of the district would be to operate a publicly funded and constructed parking garage. Studies have shown that the majority of parkers downtown are business owners and their workers. Businesses could invest in a shuttle or subsidize their workers' use of

▸ ODA *continued on page 10*

More letters from Baghdad

by Joe Carr

The following are edited excerpts from the journal of former Olympia resident Joe Carr. Carr spent May and part of June in Iraq with the Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), documenting and bearing witness to the impact of the US occupation of Iraq. His complete Iraq journal can be read at www.lovinrevolution.org. He has recently returned to the United States.

The Resistance (Late May 2005)

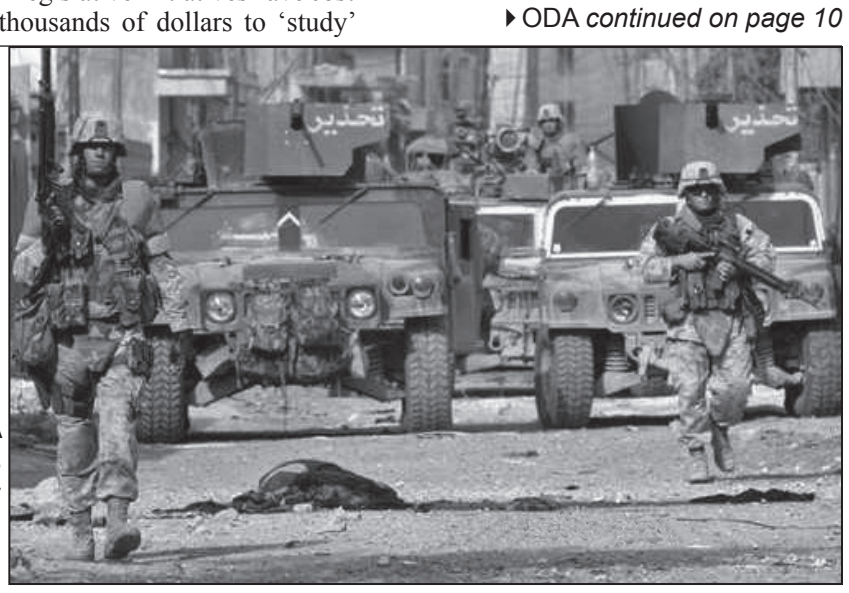
Today, I met a man who told me he was a resistance fighter. I was surprised that he trusted me enough to tell me this, and he may have been lying. I had a thousand questions for him anyway, but I didn't want to sketch him out, so I remained casual and just tried to chat with him.

He said he was from Fallujah and had fought the Americans during their first attack. American soldiers killed seven of his family members during that attack, most of whom were civilians. During the attack, it was only Fallujans defending their city, not foreign fighters. The foreigners are carrying out attacks in other parts of Iraq, and Iraqis believe that it is these foreign terrorists who attack churches and mosques, having been drawn by the presence of US troops. However, most of the attacks on the occupation forces are native Iraqis exercising their right under international law to resist an invader.

I asked him if he wanted Saddam back. "We hated Saddam," he replied, "and we did not fight the Americans when they came to overthrow him. But now the Americans are just as bad, so we'll fight them until they leave."

> He said one boy had run to his mother who'd been shot, and Americans shot him in the head. He said he saw a US commander cry as this happened. "But what good were his tears?" he asked. "He didn't do anything to stop it."

I asked him where he got his military training, and he explained that almost all of Iraq's young men are trained. Saddam sent every high school boy to a three-month military training camp. Then after high school, around 80% were conscripted into Saddam's army and received more intense training. I asked him where the resistance got their weapons, and he said that just before the invasion, Saddam distributed AK-47s to the public and encouraged them to fight. "None of us fought for Saddam," he said, "but now we'll fight for our freedom from American occupation." After the invasion, a lot of Iraq's arsenal ended up on the black market, so heavy machine guns, rocket launchers, and even missiles are easily available to them.



A woman's body lies in a street,.

Also, after the invasion there were "unexploded ordinances" all over the place. Christian Peacemakers Teams even had a campaign to get the US to clean up these dangerous weapons because children were playing with them. "At least tape them off" a CPTer asked a soldier, and the soldier said, "We don't have tape." So CPTers mailed congress rolls of yellow tape in protest of this carelessness. One CPTer told me there was an unexploded missile down the street from us. They asked American soldiers repeatedly to remove it. "They tend to disappear," one commander said. And guess what—it did—and was likely used against the occupation forces.

I asked the fighter if he was afraid there'd be civil war if the American forces left. He said it was possible, but as a Sunni, he was convinced the Sunnis would win. He said the American troops aren't doing anything to prevent civil war; indeed they're only making matters worse.

To sum up what I learned from this man: Iraqis are armed, trained, and pissed off at the Americans and their puppet Iraqi government. They're not Saddam loyalists, and they're not "foreign fighters." They love their families, they love freedom, and they'll fight occupation to the death.

▸ More letters *continued pg 6*

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, WA. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to wip@zhonka.net or mail to *Works In Progress*, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool:

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.

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"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues:

Get your catalog of indexed *WIP*'s below. Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

Cover: See Resist the BIDding of the ODA—page 1

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
July 22

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Announcements

Bringing It Home: Organizing Local Resistance to the War in Iraq

Co-sponsored by Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Olympia Friends Meeting (This is a brown-bag event.)

9am – 4 pm, Saturday July 9
St. John's Episcopal Church • Olympia, Washington

Join us for a day of learning and organizing about how to withdraw our consent to and cooperation with the Iraq war. We want to figure out how to actively and effectively resist the war through non-violence and non-cooperation by developing our collective understanding of the ties between the war in Iraq and our local community. Then, guided by the principles of non-violent social change, groups will organize around topics to develop action plans which will be posted by the end of the day.

We are challenged by author/activist Luis Rodriguez's observation that few of us have large enough imaginations to look at everyone--absolutely everyone--and say "I can see your beauty." As he writes, the fuller our imaginations become, the fuller our responses can be. Community-leader Lucilene Lira will share strategies for effective organizing at the opening plenary, and Marla Elliot of the Righteous Mothers will lead us in singing throughout the day. By 4 pm, we will have drafts of community learning and action plans—some focused on strategies for resisting local practices that support the war, and some focused on addressing local issues caused or exacerbated by the war. For more information, contact Emily Lardner at hungrytigerofoz@hotmail.com or Tom Crawford at tcpraxis@comcast.net.

EGYHOP makes a difference in local lives

While there are many homeless outreach programs in Olympia, few do as much to directly help people on the street as The Emma Goldman Homeless and Youth Outreach Project. Every night EGYHOP Outreach Workers are sent on bikes to give needed items (socks, blankets, sleeping bags, etc.) to the homeless, at-risk youth and people living below poverty line. EGYHOP also has a bike program that gives free bikes to those who need them.

EGYHOP has given out truckloads of blankets, sleeping bags and over 300 bikes, says Long Hair David, the founder of EGYHOP. EGYHOP is all volunteer run and is based on direct action principles; every donation goes directly to helping people.

EGYHOP riders provide services on the streets of Olympia during hours when the street population cannot access traditional services. They implement emergency intervention services, including referrals to other local organizations.

EGYHOP needs donations of tents, blankets, sleeping bags, large warm clothing, hygiene items, medical supplies, backpacks and camping supplies. EGYHOP's bike project is in need of usable and repairable bikes and bike parts, bike racks, panniers, bike repair tools and all other usable accessories. EGYHOP is covered under Media Island for 501(c)(3) non-profit status and can provide receipts for monetary donations.

For info, contact: Long Hair David (360) 791-2241 blackkitty@comcast.net or visit www.EGYHOP.org or drop donations off at 1103 5th Ave SE Olympia, WA 98501

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KOWA needs many things to become a better resource. Below is a list of KOWA's most pressing needs.

- Local Voices (your participation)
- CD players (single and multi-disc players)
- Microphones with XLR and ¼ in. jacks
- Record players and DJ mixer
- RCA cords
- Microphone stands
- Laptop computer
- 8 track (or more) mixing board
- XLR and ¼ in. jack cords

For more info or get involved with KOWA 106.5 fm contact Media Island 816 Adams St. SE, Olympia or www.kowafm.org or info@kowaradio.org .

▸Announcements *continued pg 11*

July 2005

As if we didn't see it coming…

Iraq's US-backed death squads

Once again the US is providing arms, ammunition, and supplies to 'special' government troops to put down 'insurgency'. Staffed primarily by former soldiers who served under Saddam Hussein, Iraq's Special Police Commandos are, not surprisingly, advised by counter-insurgency specialist James Steele, who led the counter-insurgency in El Salvador. Steve Casteel, former DEA official "immersed in the drug wars of Latin America", tops it off by being the senior US advisor to Iraq's Ministry of the Interior which oversees the operation of the Special Police Commandos. Since Iraq's new government death squad became operational last fall, "mass executions" have increased, and accusations, as stated in a State Department report this spring, of "arbitrary deprivation of life, and torture" are being made.

Along with detention centers, where US soldiers are only present at 90% of interrogations, Iraq's Special Police have their own reality TV show, *Terrorism in the Grip of Justice*. Alleged insurgents, some showing obvious signs of maltreatment, are led before the camera to "confess everything from contract murders to sodomy."

One former policeman who 'confessed' on air to two murders, was later murdered himself and delivered to his family just days following the broadcast.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
On 5 May a shallow grave was discovered in the Kasra-Wa-Atash industrial area containing 14 bodies. The victims, all young men, had been blindfolded, hands tied behind their backs and had been executed with shots to the head. The bodies revealed torture marks: broken skulls, burning, beatings, right eyeballs removed. Family members identified the bodies; the victims were Sunni farmers. According to British-based Public Interest Lawyers, they had been arrested when Iraqi security forces raided the vegetable market. Max Fuller, For Iraq "The Salvador Option" becomes reality					**1** 2004: Port of Olympia generated half a million dollars from Army in the last 2 months	**2** 2004: GAO reports $19 billion of Iraqi oil funds spent not independently reviewed
3 2003: AR supreme court overturns ban on union recruiting inside Wal-Mart stores	**4** 1999: Bush defends military record; claims no preferential treatment in Nat'l Guard	**5** 2004: Pentagon released figures show foreigners are less than 2% of Iraqi insurgents	**6** 1995: Prosecution rests in O.J. Simpson trial 2000: Eyman turns in I-722/I-745 signatures	**7** 2004: US begins redeployment of 3,600 troops in S Korea to Iraq	**8** 2004: Ridge claims credible reports of al-Qaida plans to disrupt US elections	**9** 2003: Canadian gov announces it will begin selling medical marijuana to the ill
10 2004: Philippines announces withdrawal of its troops from Iraq on Aug 20 as planned	**11** 2003: CIA's Tenet takes blame for false Iraq info in State of the Union address	**12** 2000: 6 parking meters by the Thurston County Food Bank are taped shut with duct tape	**13** 2004: Philippines now withdrawing troops in Iraq earlier than planned to save hostage	**14** 2004: House Committee votes allow hospitals, insurers to not provide/ cover abortions	**15** 2004: Bush withholding info from UN-auditors on billions awarded to contractors	**16** 2004: Feds report: Hanford workers were exposed to dangerous vapors from tanks
17 2003: Bush and Blair stand side by side and defend their invasion of Iraq	**18** 2003: Ron Sims announces King County will use cow manure to generate electricity	**19** 2004: Charleston WV apologizes to 2 who were arrested for wearing anti-Bush T-shirts	**20** 2004: Catholic Church urges followers to block Spanish gov from legalizing gay marriage	**21** 2003: Annan urges US to restore control to Iraq's people. 'Democracy can't be imposed'	**22** 2003: The White House refuses to consider pledging not to attack N. Korea	**23** 2004: 9/11 commission: US failed to act 2003: Senate funds Homeland Security
24 2003: Air Force bans Boeing from future satellite-launching contracts	**25** 2004: Israeli forces kill 4 Palestinian militants and an 18-year-old bystander at a restaurant	**26** 2004: US Archivist removed by White House; the first Pres Bush's will become public in 2005	**27** 2004: Fed audit reveals DOE not made progress in treating Handord contaminated groundwater	**28** 2003: CDC announces new AIDS cases are on increase for 1st time in decade	**29** 2003: Sharon insists Palestinian leaders are not trying to stop militant organizations	**30** 2003: Bush says he respects gays but is seeking ban of same-sex marriages
31 2004: Vatican issues letter attacking "distortions" and "lethal effects" of feminism	*What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are. We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing.* Senior US military officer to *Newsweek*				*Intriguing, a reputation for severity can accomplish as much as severity itself.* Peter Maass	

The State of the Port: One Year of Militarization

by Alice Zillah

An OMJP sponsored article

On June 23, the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace sponsored a public forum to discuss the shipments of military supplies from the port of Olympia – shipments which support the Iraq War and other Pentagon activities. After a 17-year absence, the military resumed using the port of Olympia in June, 2004.

OMJP member Crystal Lorentzson opened the forum by presenting an overview of last year's activities: from the canceled visit of the nuclear sub, the USS Olympia; to the public hearing in November; to the establishment of a permanent security zone in the harbor in December; to current activities to get full disclosure about the environmental effects of these shipments.

Carrie Lybecker, a registered nurse and OMJP member, spoke next and detailed many of the questions that remain for her and others. Below are excerpts of her remarks:

In February, under the state Open Records Act, I requested to review all Port records from January 2004 to February 2005 related to the use of the Port of Olympia by the US Armed forces, Coast Guard, or other military agencies; the transport of military equipment and supplies; the presence of military vessels, materials and personnel in the Port; and the establishment and operation of a security zone in the Port of Olympia.

I received from the Port about 700 pages of mostly invoices, for instance what the Port charged the military for the labor costs of longshoremen and police officers. The records do not contain any cost-benefit analyses or accounting reports, any environmental impact or public health and safety analyses or reports. The documents I was given do not include any communications of substance between the Port and the military.

What about the USS Olympia, which is a floating nuclear reactor? Just this past January, a similar submarine, the USS San Francisco, crashed into an underwater mountain because it was using old navigational charts. When the Navy proposed bringing the USS Olympia to our port last May, was it using current satellite maps to navigate our waters?

Are the Navy or Coast Guard using navigational or surveillance sonar in our waters, and if so, is it of the type that maims and kills marine animals?

What about Depleted Uranium? When DU explodes or is pierced, it creates a dust that can be inhaled, transported for miles via wind, and contaminate soil, water, and structures. DU may cause kidney and lung damage; lymphoma; leukemia; lung, brain, gastrointestinal, bone, and liver cancers; and may cross the placenta and affect the fetus. It is estimated that as a result of the 1991 Gulf War on Iraq, about 630,000 pounds of DU contaminated huge areas in Iraq.

Is the cargo returning from Iraq contaminated with DU dust? Are the tanks, forklifts, containers and Humvees outfitted with DU armor? If there was an explosion or crash or train derailment, what sort of fire would result? What would the potential exposure be for area residents, and are our emergency services prepared for this scenario? And frankly, what is probably the more important question is: Do the citizens of Olympia believe that shipping DU materials to war zones is the correct moral choice?

I believe that public officials have an obligation to protect our environment and to provide for public safety and health. We, citizens of Olympia, have a right to information and to participate in the decision-making process. I'd like to close with a quote from the state Open Records Act: 'The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies that serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may maintain control over the instruments that they have created.'

> "…public officials have an obligation to protect our environment and to provide for public safety and health. We, citizens of Olympia, have a right to information and to participate in the decision-making process."

Bob Van Schoorl, president of the Port Commission, spoke next. (A transcript of Van Schoorl's remarks was not available for this article.) He stated that sonar was not being used in the port of Olympia. Van Schoorl also stated that no bilge water was released in the port. According to Van Schoorl, the water which Green Party members have documented being released was uncontaminated Budd Bay water from the self-contained coolant systems that the ships use.

The subject of DU was one of the main topics of Van Schoorl's talk. He stated that all DU munitions coming from Washington were shipped from Indian Island, and that no munitions were shipped through Olympia. He also stated that all vehicles and tanks were "washed off" before being shipped from Iraq, so that they would not be contaminated with dust containing DU. Van Schoorl said that the ILWU workers unloading the ships wear sensitive radiation badges that can detect radiation, and that no radiation had been detected.

Even if there was DU on the vehicles, Van Schoorl maintained that there is no proof that DU is harmful. He said that uranium is a naturally occurring substance which is found in the environment all around us. Van Schoorl said that in this country we have a "paranoia" about radioactivity.

Van Schoorl said that the port has been pursuing the military as a customer for many years.

"It's not a new endeavor. It's an ongoing relationship we've continued to develop," he said. Since military business accounted for over a third of the port's revenue at the marine terminal last year, Van Schoorl indicated that he would like these shipments to continue.

Dennis Mills of Veteran for Peace spoke last about the moral implications of the shipments. Here is an excerpt from Mills' remarks:

Moving war material from the Port of Olympia may have given some people the impression that we are supporting the troops. For others, it may have been a great economic benefit for the Port of Olympia. The war industry provides jobs and income. It is a sad commentary of our times that we have become dependent and even benefit from preparing for war and carrying it out.

Our military shipments no longer go to our military to be used to kill 'their' military. War has become 'total war'. Warfare changed from militaries fighting other militaries to warfare where the largest number of casualties is non-combatant civilians.

For me, it is morally wrong to kill or have my government kill in my name. My property taxes help fund the Port that makes it possible to ship military material. My implicit approval by doing nothing to stop military shipments has moral implications.

We need to build a peace economy in Washington State and not benefit from the war economy. I pray that we don't rely upon yet another war in Iran or North Korea to balance our books. We need to encourage our commissioners to think outside of the box. We also can help them with our own research and creativity. After all, what will happen to our Port economy if peace breaks out?

After the presenters' talks, members of the audience asked questions and made

▸Port *continued on pg 5*

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Naval Vessel Pililaau photo by Robert Torre

▸Port from page 4

addressed the illegality of the Iraq War, and the constitutional duty of citizens to not participate in it. Van Schoorl said that he had qualms about this war, but that he was not convinced it was illegal. He stated that he did not hear "anyone in Congress" talking about this being an illegal war.

Quite a few audience members were in favor of the shipments, and those who spoke indicated it was largely because they felt these shipments "support the troops". They believed that stopping the shipments would snub the military, which already considers Olympia to be unfriendly to the armed forces because of the reaction to the visit of the USS Olympia in May of 2004.

Several speakers took issue with Van Schoorl's comments on "paranoia" about radioactivity. One woman stated that, having grown up in eastern Washington and seen birth defects caused by the release of emissions from Hanford, she found it disturbing that a public official would criticize citizens for being concerned about nuclear radiation. Another speaker who identified himself as a doctor stated we actually need to be more paranoid, both about radiation and about our government, because "governments lie". A third speaker wondered why the ILWU workers wear radiation badges if DU is not dangerous.

According to the Olympian article published the day after the forum, "Most [audience members] left with the same opinion they came in with." But what was significant was that people with very different opinions were in the same room together, and by and large treated one another with respect. It was also significant that, for perhaps the first time, a Port Commissioner publicly addressed the question of the illegality of the Iraq War. Van Schoorl's comments about not yet being convinced are indicative of the larger task that the local peace and justice movement faces. We must convince our fellow citizens that this war is illegal and immoral and that our port should not be profiting from it. Beyond that, our larger challenge is to remake our local and national economy into one that celebrates peace instead of militarism and war.

US Naval Vessel Pililaau may be responsible for rise in fecal coliform

by Drew Hendricks

On May 11, 2005 the US Naval Vessel Pililaau prepared to leave the Port of Olympia's marine terminal. Before 7:30 pm, the ship had already discharged a very large quantity of water from above its Port side waterline, out into Budd Inlet. A jet of white foam could be seen extending well into the navigation channel as the water was stirred with the discharge from the ship's bowels. Near the guest moorage south of the ship, a large quantity of floating, greenish brown material spread out on the water in a sheet hundreds of feet across. The constellation of floating debris drifted gently southward towards Fiddlehead Marina.

A faint smell of poo filled the air, as it often does in downtown Olympia.

Coast Guard vessels which normally patrol Budd Inlet during military operations in the Port of Olympia had left the scene by the afternoon of May 11th, and were not observed at the time the discharge was seen. The ship left the next day, May 12th, sometime after 10am.

On May 19, a LOTT Wastewater Alliance engineer tested a sample of the water from Fiddlehead Marina, and found that the fecal coliform levels there had risen sharply from the previous month's figures, to 280 organisms per 100mL of seawater. The other four test sites in Budd Inlet did not show such a huge bloom of fecal bacteria over the same time period.

At an OMJP forum on the militarization of the Port of Olympia held Thursday, June 23,rd Port Commissioner Robert VanSchoorl dismissed the idea that the Pililaau would have dumped either bilge water or sewage overboard in Budd Inlet, which he said would be illegal and ecologically unsound. He said it would be "stupid" for the ship's operator, Patriot Group Limited, to do so while the Coast Guard was patrolling the waters around the ship. He also said that a storm water drain in the area of Fiddlehead Marina served as a drain for some sewage, laying the blame for the observed spike in fecal coliform on sources other than the Port's operations. No one at the forum told Commissioner VonSchoorl that the incident had been videotaped by Green Party Facilitator Drew Hendricks.

Is OPD surveilling local activists?

WIP News Service

On May 1, 2005, two detectives of the Olympia Police Department took digital pictures of participants of a street march downtown. The next day, Copwatch Organizer Drew Hendricks requested those photographs from the City of Olympia. The photographs are city public records, and as such should be releasable to the public unless they are currently part of an active case file.

The detectives chose instead to delete the photographs prior to the Copwatch request, essentially denying citizens' oversight of their photographic focus on that day. Washington State statutes describe the penalties for unlawful nondisclosure of public records as being subject to a $5 - $100 fine per day, for the entire period that they are denied, fines payable to each requestor.

If the records were unlawfully destroyed, the penalties described are a $1000 fine or up to 5 years in prison, or both. Detailed schedules of record retention policies, published by the Secretary of State's office, seem to show that the records in question would normally be kept for about 18 or 19 months if they were created in May (current year plus one year). The records, when they would finally be destroyed, would also be described in a memorandum that should also be available for review, in normal circumstances. That document has not been found by OPD records clerks so far.

One of the May Day participants described to Copwatchers how the two detectives discussed her tattoo, and tried to take pictures of it. (The tattoo was positioned on her lower back, just above her butt.)

Many who were there believed that the detectives were taking not law enforcement photos - which would show the size of the crowd or particular behavior - but intelligence photos (identifying marks, faces, names and roles in organizing). The First Amendment to the US Constitution of 1789 seems to discourage the kind of activity which would chill the right of "the people peaceably to assemble for a redress of grievances." Yet somehow our political points of view do not seem to be accorded these basic protections.

City Attorney Bob Sterbank claimed in a City Council meeting that the schedules cited by Olympia Copwatch were not the ones used by the City of Olympia, but his claim was contracted by Jeanelle Kirry, the Office Supervisor who would apply the schedules to OPD documents and records.

Copwatch is considering pursuit of the case in court. If you know of an attorney who would be willing to file the papers and follow the case pro bono, please contact us at 870-3127.

Letter

Capitalist Lakefear…

Let's name it what it is: Corporate Rental of Public Space.

I've been a petition signature gatherer for a few years now, and twice now I have been told (in two consecutive years) that I cannot petition, flyer, or otherwise 'politic' in Heritage Park while it is being held (occupied) by Capitalist Lakefear.

I say we call bullshit on that! At 3pm Saturday, July 16th let us descend on that place like a swarm of citizens. Carry a petition – it could be your nominating petition for ballot access (check date!) and a pen, and a copy of the First Amendment – your permit to politic in the park. It's Our Park!

Pam A. Sheiton

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Freedom and democracy

We're not here to fight for an abstraction

Phan Nguyen

(A speech delivered by Phan Nguyen at the Sylvester Park Peace Rally on May 30th, 2004.)

A few days ago the Olympian had an editorial about the city council's hearing on the nuclear sub. The editorial said, "There's plenty of room for dissent in this community. There is no room to rebuke the men and women fighting to preserve freedom and democracy."

And I'm wondering, who are they talking about when they talk about "men and women fighting to preserve freedom and democracy?" Are they talking about the ACLU? Are they talking about the NAACP? When you bomb a wedding and then justify it by saying that "bad people have celebrations, too," (in the words of Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt) is that preserving freedom and democracy?

Now I remember at the city council hearing, many of the responses that were supportive of the nuclear sub made frequent reference to freedom and democracy, but very few people cared to define it. And I realized that as much as people value the terms freedom and democracy, very few people know what it means.

In fact the most tangible examples of freedom and democracy that were uttered at City Hall went something like this:

"If it weren't for the military, we'd all be drinking vodka and speaking Russian."

"If it weren't for the military, we'd be eating rice and fish heads and speaking Japanese."

"If it weren't for the military, we wouldn't be speaking English anymore."

In other words, the concepts of freedom and democracy have been reduced to the right to not eat fish heads, or the right to not speak Japanese.

So now I am waging a war against abstractions. Freedom and democracy are not abstract ideas. It's not something you wave around or attach to the side of your SUV.

It's something you practice, and by that I don't mean you practice it at the firing rage. You don't practice freedom and democracy with war games at Fort Lewis.

Let's face the facts. The reason I'm able to stand here and speak my mind is not because we bombed Panama. It's not because we bombed Grenada.

I am able to stand here and speak freely because many people before me risked their own personal safety to speak up in the past. Was the United States a democracy when it imprisoned Eugene Debs for speaking out against World War I?

Was the United States a democracy when it destroyed Paul Robeson for speaking out about the conditions of the oppressed?

I owe my freedom of speech to the people who got their heads bashed in during the Peekskill Riots. We owe our freedoms to people like Joe Hill or Fred Hampton or Medgar Evers. We owe it to the Wobblies who were massacred in Everett and Centralia.

Let's not glorify cluster bombs and nuclear submarines as the saviors of democracy. The ACLU does not deploy ground forces.

It's true that many women and men have died for this country. But we should remember that a good number of them were killed in this country.

Martin Luther King died for this country. Viola Liuzzo died for this country. Andrew Goodman, James Cheney and Michael Schwerner—killed in Mississippi—they died for this country.

It's sad to say that the women and men who have been sent overseas to enforce an occupation in Iraq—they're dying for George Bush and the neocon dream.

We can't depend on the inherent goodness of this country. The Patriot Act and the INS prove that our constitutional rights can be revoked overnight.

Don't take our rights for granted. The laws of this country will only protect us when we raise a fuss.

Let's not glorify cluster bombs and nuclear submarines as the saviors of democracy. The ACLU does not deploy ground forces.

Who passed the Patriot Act? It wasn't Osama bin Laden, and he's not the one upholding it, either. Who's stripping our freedoms? It's not Mullah Omar, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi or Muqtada al-Sadr. It's a bunch of good old boys with less exotic names like Bush and Ashcroft.

I've said this many times before, and I'll say it again because a lot of people still don't get it. Who did we bomb so that African Americans could have the right to vote (except in Florida)? What country do we have to invade to ensure that women here have reproductive rights?

I want you all to know that we're not here to fight for an abstraction. You can call it freedom or you can call it french fries—I don't care. But our values are human lives and human rights. Real things. Things that we can experience. Things that we miss when they're taken away from us. Human lives and human rights.

So back to the Olympian editorial. If the editorial board of the Olympian knew what it was talking about, then when it talks about the "men and women fighting to preserve freedom and democracy," it should apply to us.

Fallujah, November 2004

▸More letters Baghdad *from page 1*

Fallujah: An Unnatural Disaster

(May 28, 2005)

Today, I did what few internationals have dared to do, I went to Fallujah.

Fallujah is devastating to drive through. There is more destruction and rubble than I've ever seen in my life; even more than in Rafah, Gaza. The US has leveled entire neighborhoods, and about every third building is destroyed or damaged from US artillery. Rubble and bullet holes are everywhere, the city is indescribably ravaged. It looks like it's been hit by a series of tornados.

US troops, Iraqi military, and Iraqi police have an overwhelming presence in the city. I've never seen such dirty looks directed at the passing forces. Perhaps in most places people get used to the occupier, but in Fallujah, the hate is still very alive. 16,000 Fallujan police lost their jobs after the US attacks and were replaced by Shiite from the South. The US intentionally sends Shiite to patrol Sunni strongholds to breed resentment and abuse, and it works. Soldiers shoot anyone who drives too close to their convoys, which makes driving anywhere in this small city incredibly dangerous. It is very easy to accidentally turn a corner and find yourself in the midst of a convoy. The hospital said that one or two people a week die from the indiscriminate fire of US and Shiite occupation forces.

There are horror stories everywhere. We visited a family's home in a neighborhood where every structure was damaged or destroyed. Their home was full of holes and completely black inside from fire. They said that they'd left during the fighting with their home intact and returned to find all of their possessions burned. Three families—over 25 people, including four infants—are now living in this 3-room house because their homes were completely destroyed. Some of them tried to get compensation from the US military but were denied.

Fallujah has only one hospital with inpatient care. Other clinics and treatment centers were bombed by US troops, and soldiers prevented many people from getting to the hospital during the attacks. Even after the fighting, the US kept the bridges closed, which caused several people to die of heart attacks when they couldn't get to the hospital fast enough. People from the rural areas surrounding Fallujah are also now dying of treatable illnesses because they can't get through the checkpoints to the Fallujah hospital. One hospital employee said that many patients die when they try to transfer them to hospitals outside Fallujah. "It's better to take them in a civilian car than in an ambulance" he said, "because the troops delay and search ambulances more." During the first attack, the hospital became a main source of information for the outside world. So when the US attacked the second time, they took over the hospital area first and controlled what information got out.

Meeting a Sunni cleric was the highlight of the trip. He was a young, passionate man and quite articulate. He told us about some horror stories he'd witnessed. During the first invasion, several families near his Mosque took cover in a home. US troops used megaphones to order all them out into the street and told them to carry a white flag. They did this, but when they all got out, the soldiers opened fire into the group, killing five. He said one boy had run to his mother who'd been shot, and Americans shot him in the head. He said he saw a US commander cry as this happened. "But what good were his tears?" he asked. "He didn't do anything to stop it."

While meeting with the cleric, a man told us some of his horror stories. "The Americans shot and killed my 15-year-old daughter," he said, "was she a terrorist?" He said the US military denied killing her and refused to give him even minimal compensation. The US gave him only half the compensation for his house that they destroyed. "With all respect to you," he said, "I hate Americans. They killed my family. My children cannot play in the street. They shot and killed my sister-in-law while she was washing clothes, and my other brother's hands and feet were blown off." He apologized for interrupting, but said that he had to tell us because he's in so much pain.

Iraqis are armed, trained, and pissed off at the Americans and their puppet Iraqi government. They're not Saddam loyalists, and they're not "foreign fighters." They love their families, they love freedom, and they'll fight occupation to the death.

I felt incredibly safe in Fallujah; the people I spoke with were kind and gentle. They are rightfully angry and indignant at what the US has done to them, but they seemed to understand that it wasn't me or all Americans that did it. The cleric said, "We are grateful that you come here and share in our suffering and agony, it shows that there are good and human Americans."

Fallujah is the face of US occupation. It shows how ruthless the US will be toward anyone who dares resist its agenda. But Fallujah has not stopped resisting. It is said that "you can't bomb a resistance out of existence, but you can bomb one into it." The unnatural disaster the US has unleashed on the Middle East is horrifying, and we all must resist it.

Founding Father

Christianity neither is, nor ever was, a part of the Common Law.
Thomas Jefferson

Impeach Bush now
A quick way to end the insurgency

by Sam Husseini

Sectors of the peace movement in the U.S. -- at least those which still show signs of having a pulse -- have seized upon the Downing Street Memo which might finally draw out in some substantive fashion the deceitful manner in which the U.S. moved toward the invasion of Iraq. The group AfterDowningStreet.org has called for an inquiry into possible impeachable offenses committed by Bush.

Meanwhile other people in the U.S. who continue to back Bush are focusing on "how to end the insurgency." They talk of the U.S. military casualties in Iraq and see that Donald Rumsfeld now states that the insurgency could last 12 years.

The two camps actually answer each other. If you want to end the insurgency -- or resistance, depending on your views -- then make an honest accounting of what your own government has done. Doing that will be well-received and respected by others. Bush lied the country into war and initiated the war in an unconstitutional manner. The fact that the Congress, the media, and to a large extent, the U.S. public were complicit in this does not absolve Bush. They each should be judged as expeditiously as possible, but Bush should be impeached -- now.

Doing so will have an impact in the Mideast and beyond.

Consider:

After the February 15, 2003 protests, the leadership of Hezballah said they would no longer burn U.S. flags. They perceived that substantial parts of the U.S. public were outwardly opposing the then-impending invasion of Iraq. They changed.

More recently, the Iranian people also perceived how the U.S. functions: They were basically threatened no matter who won their election. They discerned that that the U.S. attacked Iraq even though Iraq did not have weapons or mass destruction and was allowing access to UN inspectors (despite the fact that such inspections had been used for espionage against Iraq in the past). Based on this, the Iranian people did the obvious thing: They voted for the candidate who is almost always described as the "hardliner" -- but on economic issues sounds like a socialist -- and not the WTO-loving "reformer."

An impeachment of Bush, for the right reasons might be the surest, quickest way to ending the violent resistance in Iraq, ending further bloodshed and beginning a real democratic process…

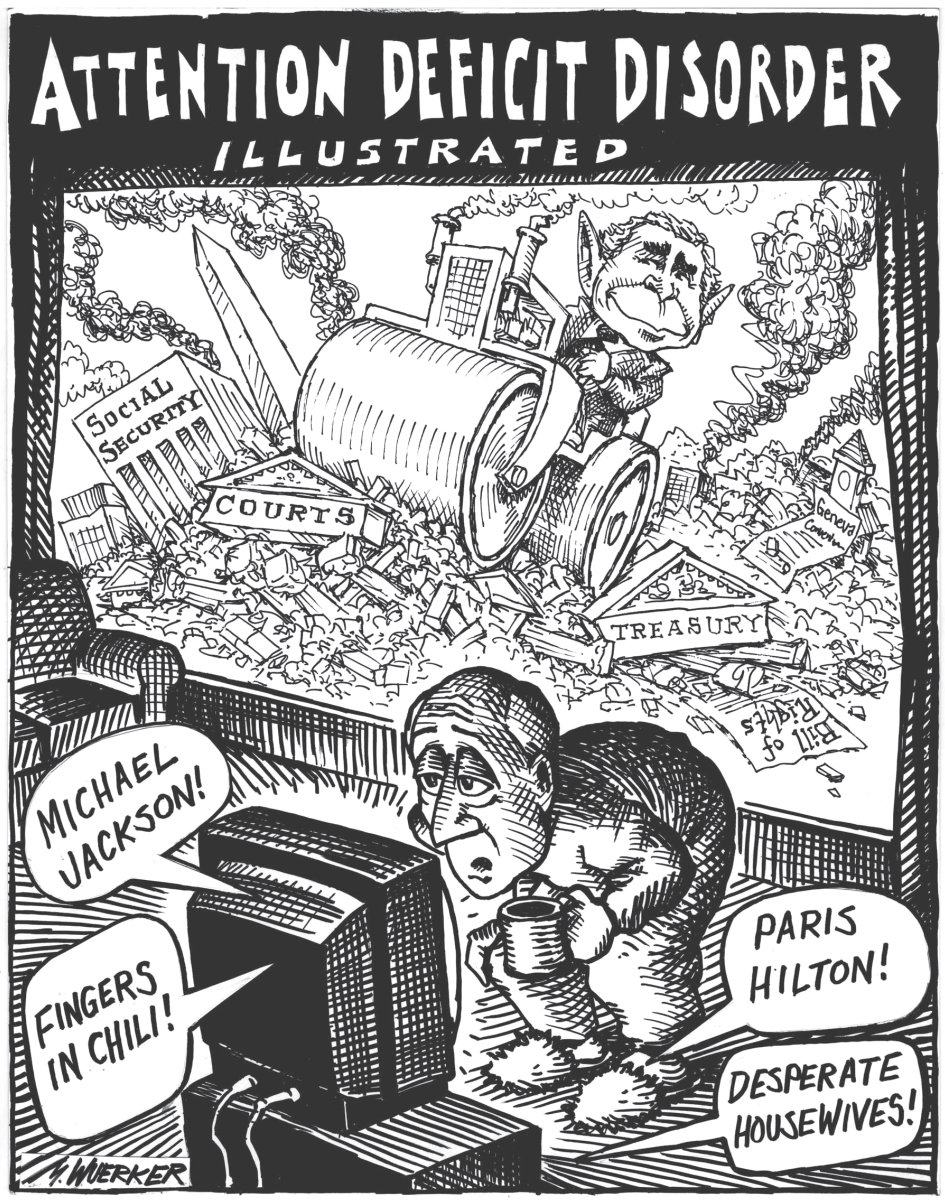
Such actions by Iranians might tick off liberals in the U.S., but if these liberals had done their alleged job and really changed U.S. politics, the dynamics would be different in the Mideast.

There might still be a bit of time to redress this before further calamities occur.

An impeachment of Bush, for the right reasons -- and not for some peripheral technicality -- might be the surest, quickest way to ending the violent resistance in Iraq, ending further bloodshed and beginning a real democratic process which is designed by Iraqis in accord with the region and not U.S. administration and corporate ambitions. All the people in Iraq -- including the resistance which the administration tells us it is speaking to, at least on days they are not dismissing them as "terrorists" -- will take note. And, like Hezballah, which is converting itself to a political party, they will change.

The people of the U.S. can demand an impeachment of Bush and signal to the people of Iraq, the Mideast and the world that they will take matters into their hands and show they want a modicum of peace and justice on this planet. That is, if the people of the U.S. actually do want a modicum of peace and justice on this planet.

Sam Husseini has just returned from the Mideast to the U.S. Some of his writings are at www.husseini.org.



Keeping Americans ignorant about Iran will make it easier to launch the missiles

by Norman Solomon

Keep them behind the war curve.

While some Americans are exposing the deception for the latest war, steadily lay the groundwork for the next one.

Focus plenty of news reports on alienated youth in Iran, spotlighting despair that borders on nihilism. Meanwhile, give scant media attention to the growth of civil society, with many thousands of Iranian young people and their elders striving to create a diffuse yet coherent social movement for democracy and human rights.

Make it easy for the U.S. public to forget -- or remain ignorant of -- key elements in the United States history with Iran. Such as the U.S.-organized 1953 coup that overthrew the democratically elected Iranian prime minister, democrat Muhammad Mussadiq, and installed a brutal shah who ruled for a quarter century. Or the U.S. government's record of aiding the Saddam Hussein regime in its eight-year war with Iran after Iraqi troops attacked Iran in 1980.

Make it easy for the U.S. public to forget -- or remain ignorant of -- key elements in the United States history with Iran

Count on most members of Congress, even those lambasting the White House over the Downing Street Memo, to be silent or voice support while the Bush administration proceeds with agenda-setting for a U.S. -- or U.S.-backed Israeli -- missile attack on Iran. Along the way, make that country out to be a nuclear pariah while it adheres to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (which the nuclear-armed Israeli government still refuses to sign).

Incrementally poison the potential for a lessening of tensions between Washington and Tehran.

With implicit threats of military action against Iran, heighten the obstacles faced by Iranian democracy activists. Denigrate the presidential election in Iran, even though -- or maybe because -- the flawed election has been a valuable tool utilized by an emerging democracy movement to widen public discourse and deepen the country's political process. Strengthen the hand of Iran's hardliners while denouncing them. Undermine the democracy activists of Iran while claiming to favor them. Make sure that Washington reduces the odds of democratic progress by greatly pressurizing the situation, enabling Iranian advocates of repression to plausibly claim that Iran is under threat of foreign intervention. Above all, keep encouraging Americans to see Iran as a nation best understood with Washington's policy-driven clichés, rather than a country with a complex and authentic political process underway. The less that Americans really know about Iran, the easier it will be to launch the missiles.

Norman Solomon, executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, is currently in Tehran. His latest book, "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death," came off the press this week. For information, go to: www.WarMadeEasy.com

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In loving memory An ode to Lenny (Leonard C. Walden)

by Long Hair David

It was late 1991 when I walked into Orca Books. Behind the counter was an older man, short man with gray hair, kind of heavy, dressed in working clothes, a little unkempt. Another man came out from behind the row of books, tall, with a bit of swagger to his walk, and he said in a boisterous way, "Watcha need?"

That was Lenny, and that was the first time I can remember meeting him. Lenny used to come by the Smithfield café once in awhile. He really didn't recognize me back then. It wasn't until well after I had been working the underground needle exchange, Olympia Aids Prevention Projects (OAPP), that he really knew who I was. In those years I could be found walking around with two big black bags over my shoulder. One was a book-bag with paperwork and stuff, and the other was a big camera case which contained the needles and sharps container for collecting and exchanging needles on the streets. Lenny would come up to me and say, "Long Hair, watcha got in that bag!" See, back then if you were in the know, you knew what I had in that bag, and Lenny knew what I was carrying, and that was his way of saying: I approve of what you're doing. Lenny was a very smart man, but he was the kind of man people would misunderstand. They wouldn't realize how intelligent he was. I think a lot of people never quite knew Lenny.

Years later here in Olympia when I was working for Books to Prisoners, Lenny would come up to me on the streets or into the back of Bulldog News and give me books. Lenny was a top-notch book scout (he forgot more about books than most young bookmen will ever know). He would come up with books he found at the free-box and at the Co-op, or he would stop by the 25-cent rack outside of Browsers Books. He would say, "Hey Long Hair! You wouldn't believe the great literature you can find on Browsers' 25-cent rack, look here." And he would pull out works of Faulkner or Richard Wright, and obscure things that I had never heard of, like W.E.B. Dubois. He would say you should send those guys some of this. In fact my very first book of Bukowski was a copy of Pulp Lenny gave me. You see, in those days I knew nothing about books, and it was from people like Lenny I started to learn about the world of books.

> Lenny was one of those men that had no problem telling another man that he loved him. He always told me that. "I love you Long Hair David." He always told me that, and I would tell him that I loved him too.

I used to run into Lenny often up at the Westside Co-op, and if you knew Lenny you would know that he struggled with the world of Alcoholism. Sometimes he would be drunk for weeks on end and would look like hell, but he never forgot who I was and would always come up

to me and give me old Lenny-type hugs. Lenny was a big man and could have snapped a little guy like me in half. But he was a gentle giant, even when drunk he never ever in any way made me feel like he could or would hurt anyone.

Lenny knew I was in recovery and would apologize to me because he had relapsed again. I would tell him, "Lenny, it don't matter; drunk or sober you are still my friend."

Lenny was one of those men that had no problem telling another man that he loved you. He always told me that. "I love you Long Hair David." He always told me that, and I would tell him that I loved him too.

Sometimes Lenny would be quite sad and come up to me feeling the blues. He would say, "Long Hair I'm sorry," and he would say, "I fucked up again!" I would tell him, "Lenny, it don't matter, I still love you, you old freak." I told him many times: no matter what, you're still my friend.

The last time I remember seeing Lenny, he was out front of Last Word books. I think he introduced me to his family. I remember telling him, " You're my Lenny." Ya see, that's what I would tell him all the time. If you knew Lenny then you would know; to know Lenny was to love him. He was just that kind of guy. You could not help but love that old fart. And I really did.

I loved Lenny. He was my friend.

OPD TASER use dropped dramatically in February, March and April

by Drew Hendricks

Olympia Police used force on 43 occasions in the first four months of 2005, but only used TASERs in four cases of the 27 times force was reported used in February through April 2005. This is a drop from the previous monthly average of 4.5 TASER uses per month seen in the previous two years.

The dramatic drop in reported use of force apparently stemmed from a meeting in February where Chief of Police Gary Michel and his Commanders and Lieutenants discussed limiting TASER use. That meeting included advocate Vince Brown, of Columbia Legal Services. No decision was reported to be finalized as a result of that meeting, although the differences seen since then seem to be significant:

January
Total incidents: 17 TASER uses: 3

February
Total Incidents: 10 TASER uses: 1

March
Total Incidents: 6 TASER uses: 0

April
Total Incidents: 11 TASER uses: 3

Total use of TASERs in 2003 and 2004: 107 incidents (4.46 per month).

Progress in changing Olympia Police practices: priceless.

Drew Hendricks, an Olympia Copwatch organizer, can be reached at 870-3127.

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One to go!

Two Plowshares Nuns Home from Federal Prison

by Holly GG

Plowshares Nuns, Sisters Jackie Hudson and Carol Gilbert, wrongfully convicted in 2002 of sabotage and damages to a nuclear missile silo, are out of federal prisons and on parole! Both have been allowed to remain in Washington and Maryland respectively. Sister Ardeth Platte remains in prison in Danbury CT until December.

All chose parole rather than making court-decreed restitution of $3080.04 for damages military Humvees did to fences around the Colorado silo field October 6, 2001. An appeal that would have lifted the restitution failed, although hundreds of thousands of dollars and alternative services were donated in the nuns' names to make up for damages.

As of June, $362,000 plus has been recorded in donations of time and money to donors' places of choice in 8 countries and 17 states as alternate restitution! The court board denied this enlightened alternative. The sisters feel they have more than repaid the government with their work in prison.

Sr Jackie left Victorville, CA Federal Prison on March 4, returning to Bremerton on the 6th to a party with loved ones. Jackie was relieved to be granted parole in Seattle. Original demands from the parole board could have kept her and Carol in halfway houses in Colorado for three years.

On April 6, Ground Zero House in Bangor, for so many years the center for Live without Trident actions, non-violence training and meetings, was completely gutted by fire. Rather than dwell on possible causes for the mysterious blaze, GZ plans to rebuild. Donations are gladly accepted toward this end.

During a recent cleanup work party at GZ House, Jackie broke her left wrist, but is healing well. Her parole officer has threatened Jackie with parole violation since she refuses to make monthly restitution payments. If Jackie has to return to jail, she hopes she's out of her cast first since prison medicine is notoriously lacking.

Write to Sr Jackie Hudson at jackiehudson123@yahoo.com.

Sr Carol Gilbert is home at Jonah House in Baltimore, MD with Phillip Berrigan's widow Liz McAlister and others in the Plowshares community. She reported to the MD Federal Probation office on Wednesday and has two probation officers, one in CO and one in MD. The local officer is part of the Special Offenders Specialist and knew Philip Berrigan and Jonah House very well.

"The first sixty days there is no travel and because I refuse to pay any restitution or have someone pay in my name there will be no travel approval given outside the state of MD. Many times a day the women I left behind come to mind. I hope they will forgive me for taking longer to do the things I promised to do for them but they will get done! I did not crochet the poncho for Martha Stewart. I gave her a royal purple bookmark I made and blessed her with our "witness for peace" blessing.

"A little book, Journeys of Simplicity, tells of forty travelers and the few, ordinary things they carried with them from place to place, day to day, birth to life. In the introduction, Philip Harnden, the Quaker author, suggests we travel through life like a "single leaf." He poses these questions to consider...where do our journeys take us? What do we leave behind? What do we carry with us? How do we find the way? How do we live like a single leaf?

"My best friend Ardeth still has 7 months in prison and I can't visit her. My deepest hope has been to live faithfully so that not one child would ever ask me, 'Where were you? Were you complicit?'

"Each day our task is to love those in our midst. Wherever we find ourselves we are where we need to be at that moment in time – our eternal now. You are all a deep memory in my heart these days." Reach Sr Carol in care of www.jonahhouse.org.

Sr Ardeth Platte writes from the Federal Prison at Danbury, CT, where she is in good spirits but dealing with a recurring rash brought on by allergic reaction to medication. On April 29th, the three sisters received the Religious Order of Peace and Justice Award.

Ardeth writes, "The Belgian Senate passed a nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation resolution calling for the withdrawal of the 480 U.S. nuclear weapons based in Belgium, Germany, England, Italy, The Netherlands and Turkey. The U.S. is the only country to have nuclear weapons placed on the territory of other countries.

"We continue our hope, prayers and actions for total nuclear disarmament and for nuclear non-proliferation. The sunflower is the international symbol for nuclear abolition. Let's plant sunflowers at all nuclear and governmental sites.

"In the early 1980's Sister Carol spent time with Action for Peace in Nicaragua and then in Honduras and Nicaragua with Witness for Peace. Upon her return home she presented information about the CIA manual that taught violent tactics, torture, assassination, etc. to destabilize and overthrow the Sandinistas by the Contras. So it certainly does not surprise us observing the terrible torture, assassinations and maltreatment of prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo in criminal defiance of Geneva Conventions and international law by U.S. government and military officials.

"In order to be a full participant in this spiritual journey I must put aside any brokenness, fear, hopelessness, and broken relationships. I must die to this old way and identity to become a new creation.

"We are all ordinary people on this journey. There are no heroes or especially courageous travelers among us. We recognize that fasting and prayer strengthen the body and spirit, but it is God who takes the brunt of the burdens and lessens loads on the way so we may seek a renewal, a revolution of the heart, a new creation of peace and justice. We need a new beginning."

Write to Sr Ardeth Platte, OP, #10857-039, FPC Danbury, 33 ½ Pembroke Station, Danbury CT 06811.

WROC Report Card on DSHS

TANF and Workfirst caseworkers still have room for improvement

Olympia, WA -- 6/22/05 – Since 1999, WROC has been grading DSHS on customer service and the WorkFirst Program. Olympia WROC members delivered this years grades to Region 6 Administrator, Cindy Mund, on Wednesday, June 22, 2005. We were surprised that the entire management team for the region was also present.

"While this year's grades show an improvement in customer service, some disturbing trends emerged," said Kara Anderson, the WROC volunteer who analyzed the data at the Olympia WROC office. This year, overall customer service rated a B- compared to a C+ in the last report card. Folks receiving GAU or SSI seemed happier on the whole then parents receiving TANF. Also report cards tended to be either all As and Bs or all Ds and Fs. Why are some people receiving A and B service, while others are receiving D and F treatment?

We suggested that one answer may be caseworker inequity. "We tend to get calls about the same five caseworkers in an office over and over again," said Monica Peabody, organizer at the Olympia WROC office. "We never hear about the majority of caseworkers because they are doing their job well." Out of hundreds of caseworkers in offices throughout our area, twenty-three were nominated for certificates of appreciation. WROC members asked administrators what they plan to do about caseworkers who repeatedly withhold pertinent information about benefits, treat people badly and sometimes terminate, sanction or withhold their benefits illegally.

> "Have you ever felt discriminated against based on race, disability, religion, gender or age?" The majority of respondents...chose disability. "I got talked to slowly and deliberately and if I'm with someone, they talk to them."

Another disturbing discovery is that the very people who need help the most seem to have the hardest time getting it. The report card asked the question, "Have you ever felt discriminated against based on race, disability, religion, gender or age?" The majority of respondents in Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Grays Harbor, Cowlitz and Clark counties chose disability. "I got talked to slowly and deliberately and if I'm with someone, they talk to them." Jonathon, Kelso

The second most common complaint of discrimination was social status, even though it wasn't listed as an option. "Everybody seems to be discriminated against because we need help." Recipient, Olympia. Franchesca Denise Pearson said she felt like she was discriminated against because she was a single, low-wage working mother. "Why should I be made to feel that what I do is not good enough?"

The lowest grades in the TANF/WorkFirst section of the report card were received for questions pertaining to poverty reduction. Monica Edwards spoke about her success with the Customized Job Skills Training, a program which is now defunded. She said the Workfirst program has taught her only how to misrepresent herself on her resume and the treatment she received from her caseworker has been horrible. Sandra Smith added that she has had to leave the WorkFirst office because of the anxiety she felt witnessing this caseworkers treatment of other recipients.

We suggested one possible reason for the failure of WorkFirst to move families out of poverty could be that caseworkers are not supporting parents in getting the education and training they need to get a better job. Franchesca talked about how she was discouraged from pursuing higher education towards a career that was above minimum wage. Mike Masten, Administrator for the Vancouver CSO, suggested that perhaps she was unaware that she was a WorkFirst participant. Franchesca clarified that she was told she couldn't get TANF if she went to school.

WROC members demanded improvement in caseworker inequity, caseworker discrimination and legal implementation of the rules and policies around education and training. They asked to meet with the management team again in 6 months to get a report on what steps they have they have taken to meet our demands. WROC plans to continue using the Report Card as an outreach and organizing tool and to allow low-income parents to voice their concerns and suggest areas for improvement.

Founding Father

The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason.

Benjamin Franklin

▸ ODA *from page 10*

alternative transportation to free up the streets for consumer needs. It would be less expensive than demanding a parking garage. The Downtown Neighborhood Association conducted a survey of residents. The preliminary results show that residents were more interested in improved public transportation than a parking garage. If a parking garage is so needed, surely a private entity would have already seen the merits of building one. Their plan sounds too much like plundering public resources for private gain.

The city's Comprehensive Plan and city priorities seek to develop downtown as 'Mixed-Use' with some residential, some retail, some commercial, etc. Declaring downtown a business zone is not consistent with such community-minded plans and priorities. Such a zone downtown could approach a sense of community if it included improved business guarantees such as fair trade, living wages, mandatory recycling and waste reduction, and additional consumer protection requirements; residential discounts; and enhanced public accommodations including open access to restrooms.

A BID would be unfair to the two captive markets downtown, residents and local consumers. Since the BID would compel financial contributions from all businesses (something the ODA has not been able to accomplish otherwise), the cost of which would undoubtedly be passed onto the consumer, the raising of rent and all other prices downtown would result. And the consumers won't necessarily have a vote on the formation of the district or how the funds are to be spent. If I'm not mistaken this country was founded on the slogan, "No taxation without representation!" It seems the ODA is behind the times.

The only upside to their BID proposal that I see is an implied statement that downtown Olympia is no longer 'struggling' since they are so pleased with downtown they are considering raising prices across the board. Hopefully, their consistent negative campaign over the decades that

Like the dysfunctional love affair between the City of Olympia and the ODA; sometimes it's just a little hard to look at.

downtown is struggling which has pitted them as 'underdogs' to the 'controlling interests of the youth and homeless' under the construction of 'safety' is finally finished. Goodbye to their clever attempts to deprive vulnerable populations of their civil rights. Actual crime downtown as documented by the Olympian and the police department has remained fairly constant -- and was never really high. Fear of crime and fear of 'others' are the flames fanned for decades by the ODA. Downtown is safe – just ask those who live downtown.

Hopefully enough local businesses can come together to oppose the ODA's BIDding so we can maintain downtown's mixed-use character. We regular citizens, flesh and blood persons, are second-class citizens without a right to vote on the issue that will certainly affect those of us who value downtown Olympia.

A business association in neighborhood clothing?

An inquiry into the Olympia Downtown Association

by Beth Ward

When people talk about the Olympia Downtown Association (ODA) it seems like they either love it or hate it. Some describe it as a welcoming, inclusive group while others view the ODA as an exclusivist association dominated by downtown retail interests. So what is the ODA?

Founded in the late 1980's, the ODA is recognized by the city as a neighborhood association, which is a conglomerate of people who join together to improve the quality of their neighborhood and can choose to complete the proper paperwork and be recognized by the city as an official association. The ODA's boundaries span from the Capitol to the Port, and from Eastside St. to the 4th Ave. Bridge. They participate in or manage many popular downtown events including the Arts Walks and Music in the Park. Their mission statement: To preserve and promote downtown Olympia as the commercial, financial, cultural and recreational center for the region.

> The ODA is not really a neighborhood association at all. According to Connie Lorenze, the ODA's executive director, "The ODA's focus is more on business." In fact, she admits the ODA is "not really a neighborhood association, we only used that title for a few years to help us get some grant money."

So far so good. And yet, that sounds like a pretty big mission for a neighborhood association. That's because the ODA is a bit different from the rest of Olympia's neighborhood associations; of their 200 plus members, according to their membership roster almost all are downtown business owners. In fact, if you're interested in joining the ODA you'll find that the membership costs vary with the size of your business. Most neighborhood associations are made up of people who live within the neighborhoods boundaries, but the ODA is not. This difference is explained in the bylaws of the ODA. Less than halfway down the first page under the heading "Purpose" it reads: "The members of the downtown business community do hereby join together to promote a political, economic, and social atmosphere of mutual support so that all downtown business people… may pursue their economic goals with dignity and respect from their fellow businesses, government, and the community at large."

That does not sound like the purpose of a neighborhood association. The reason for this is that the ODA is not really a neighborhood association at all. According to Connie Lorenze, the ODA's executive director, "The ODA's focus is more on business." In fact, she admits the ODA is "not really a neighborhood association, we only used that title for a few years to help us get some grant money." This is where people start to have problems with the ODA. Many feel that if the ODA is not serving the purpose of a neighborhood association they should not get funding intended for neighborhood associations.

A neighborhood association is usually formed when a group of people want to improve the livability of their neighborhoods. But most members of the ODA don't live downtown; they just own their business there. Bob Jacobs, a former ODA member and former Mayor of Olympia explains that, "business associations [like the ODA] are a healthy thing when they involve people working together for mutual benefit, for example when small businesses join together to get reduced rates for medical benefits. But sometimes these associations become powerful and push their own agenda to have things passed that may not be what residents want."

Joe Hyer, co-owner of the Alpine Experience, ODA member, and a City Council member, seems to hold the same view of the ODA. Though he describes the ODA as the strongest representative of downtown businesses and really enjoys being part of the association, he says the ODA "is not really for residents, the board is made up of business owners, so it does not necessarily promote what the residents want." Hyer points out that a new neighborhood association, the Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA), has recently started, and he is glad of it. "The DNA will be able to promote what the residents want, and I hope that the ODA and DNA will be able to work closely in the future." Now that there is the DNA to contrast, it is more apparent than ever that the ODA is not really a neighborhood association.

Still, they continue to receive neighborhood association grant money from the city.

According to the City's Unified Development Code, Chapter 18.86 (Neighborhood Association Recognition and Notification), for a neighborhood association to be recognized by the city and therefore be able to receive Neighborhood Matching Grant funds, they must fulfill many requirements. A few of these include allowing full membership to all persons residing within its boundaries, and holding at least one meeting per year for which it gives written notice to every household, place of business and property owner within the associations boundaries; mailed declarations, delivered handbills, or a number of prominent signs are all examples of adequate notice. It's with these rules concerning inclusion and notification that the ODA may have some problems.

First there is the question of full membership. According to Connie Lorenze, anyone who wants to buy their membership may join and vote as is laid out in their bylaws. Yet when one reads the ODA's bylaws the section on membership states that there will be two kinds of members. A Business Membership is a membership for any person or representative of a person holding a business license, or for any property owner within the downtown boundaries. An Associate Membership is available to all other interested persons, businesses or organizations. The rules about voting consists of one line: "One Business Membership per business shall entitle the holder to one vote (Section 7.01)." There are no other exceptions for voting memberships in the bylaws.

The second question is that of advertising to all people within the associations boundaries at least one meeting per year. Rachel Schleif, who lives in the Elks Apartments downtown, says that she has only heard of the ODA's annual meeting through word of mouth. Lorenze explains that they put notice of the meeting in their newsletter, send an email to all their members, and give a press release to the local newspaper and radio station. "Anyone can come to the meetings, but typically," says Lorenze, "[notice of the meeting] goes out to members though." In this way, it would seem, the ODA fails to meet the requirements of being a neighborhood association.

The Neighborhood Matching Grant is only up to $2,000 a year, and the ODA is able to raise funds that far exceed the $2,000 matched by the city. In the Neighborhood Matching Grant records it shows that since 2002 the ODA has been able to match the city grant money with anything from $8,000 to $21,000. Schleif believes that, "if businesses want public funds, they should ask openly. The ODA needs to take account of resident's opinions and wants."

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360.943.8044
233 Division St NW

OMJP forum on an Olympia Nuclear Free Zone ordinance

The city of Olympia is considering an ordinance to declare Olympia a Nuclear Free Zone. OMJP is holding a forum to discuss this (and possibly some other closely related issues) at Traditions Cafe & World Folk Art, 300 5th Avenue SW, Olympia, on Thursday, July 21 from 7:00 – 9:00 P.M. Speakers will include T.J. Johnson, the Olympia City Council member who originally submitted the proposal.

Announcements

▸Announcements continued *from page 2*

City Offers Free Rain Gauges and Sensors

Temperatures in the South Sound continue to rise. As it gets hotter, water use increases too. To help customers save water, the City of Olympia offers some simple, free water conservation tools.

Lawns only need about one inch of water each week, including rain, to stay green. The City of Olympia offers free rain gauges to help residents and businesses measure how much water their lawns are getting.

Additionally, free rain sensors are available to water customers who have automatic sprinkler systems. Rain sensors save water by electrically deactivating irrigation systems when it rains. Both of these devices are available, free of charge, to City of Olympia water customers only.

To request a free rain gauge or free rain sensor, call the City of Olympia Water Conservation Program at (360) 753-4444 ext. 8390. Quantities are limited.

Support Olympia-Rafah Sister City Delegation

Four members of our community are heading to Palestine to further the work of The Olympia-Rafah Sister City Project this coming fall. Come learn about the goals of this delegation and how you can help us achieve this important connection between our two communities. Steve Niva will also be talking about envisioning a new U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and why Israel/Palestine remains a crucial issue. Hear about this exciting community-building opportunity and find out ways you can support this project.

This fundraiser will be held at 7pm, Thursday, July 28th at St. John's Episcopal Church, in the Parish Hall. The church is located off Capital Way at 114 20th Ave SE. For more information contact 360-556-4673

Olympia Workers Get Organized

The Olympia Workers Association's mission is to assist working people in Olympia who want to improve their working conditions. Workers in all different types of employment deal with the same issues - job insecurity, health, safety, and childcare issues, bad pay, and the general lack of respect for wage workers. The Olympia Workers Association believes all people deserve workplace dignity, a living wage, safe working conditions and workplace democracy. Call us at 1-360-754-1350

The Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation's Social Justice Film Series

This series offers thought provoking films and documentaries on issues ranging from civil liberties protection, to the creation of a true democracy, to human rights, to environmental policy. Movies are followed by a facilitated discussion.

All films are free and are shown at the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, located at 2200 East End St NW in Olympia. The film series is sponsored by the Social Justice Committee of the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation. For information on these and other activities, go to www.olyuu.org or contact socialjustice@olyuu.org.

Showing July 10, 2005, at 4pm

This documentary tells the story of a Libby, Montana – a mining town which started out as a logging center, then when the trees were gone, turned to the earth. Director Doug Hawes-Davis relies on current-day video footage with a smattering of archival film for his touching documentary. Eric Trimble, a member of OUUC and native of Libby, will join us to discuss his experiences.

Showing August 7, 2005, at 4pm

Hiroshima: Why the Bomb was Dropped -- ABC's Peter Jennings explores events leading up to and following the United State's controversial use of an atomic bomb against Japan. This film is shown in coordination with a weeklong series of events highlighting the 60th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Beyond Hiroshima Coalition. More information aboutspeakers, activities, and events can be found at www.beyondhiroshima.org.

Washington Citizen Action at a Statewide Health Care Forum

As insurance premiums rise and employer-based health care declines, more and more people are getting lost in the shuffle - forced to go entirely without health care or deal with coverage that doesn't meet their needs.

Join Washington Citizen Action on Saturday, August 13th, from 9:00 to 10:30 am, at Seattle University as we tell Washington's legislators and leaders to put people first and address the growing health care crisis. At this Statewide Health Care Forum, we will present to our state leaders the depth of the health care problem across the state in our local communities, and the urgent need to address it NOW.

Washington Citizen Action suggests three options to reform the system:

- Require employers to provide health care for their employees or pay a fair contribution to public programs that will provide that coverage.
- Dramatically increase the number of "slots" available in the Basic Health Plan, ensuring that every eligible resident of the state can enroll in the program if they do not have access to other affordable plans.
- Create a universal coverage program at the state level that would offer a voluntary alternative to private health insurance plans for all Washington residents.

For more info, carpools, and to RSVP, please contact Joshua Welter @ 360-413-0842 or joshua@wacitizenaction.org .

For info about WA Citizen Action, also visit www.wacitizenaction.org.

Founding Father

Ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitate the execution of mischievous projects.

James Madison

Beyond Hiroshima: Reflection and Action for a Nuclear-Free World

by Jody Suhrbier

A small group of thoughtful citizens have come together and decided that Olympia, Washington and the greater South Sound community should have an opportunity to reflect on nuclear weapons and the post-nuclear age. This summer marks the sixtieth anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and will be a time of acknowledgment, reflection, and action as the Beyond Hiroshima Coalition presents a series of events for the community to take part in.

The goals of this effort are threefold: to develop a series of events to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to draw attention to the continued existence and proliferation of nuclear weapons, particularly the accelerated pace of weapons development under the current presidential administration, and to empower and motivate local citizens to work towards elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020, if not sooner.

Preliminary Events

June 28 through the month of July
Discussion group will be meeting to discuss the book by John Hersey titled "Hiroshima" at the Olympia Library. This book is a series of first-hand accounts of the victims of the Hiroshima bombing.

July 27 (Wednesday)
Community potluck celebration to welcome the "Nagasaki to Hope: Peace Walk² to Olympia. This walk begins in Richland, near the Hanford Nuclear Site and ends at the Trident Base in Bangor. The welcoming potluck will be at the park by Percival Landing at 6:00.

July and August
Informational programming around the issues of nuclear war and proliferation will be aired on TCTV and KAOS at various times throughout these two months

Primary Series of Events

August 3 (Wednesday)
Reception at Side Door Gallery with an unveiling of a collection of forty posters from the Japanese A-Bomb Survivors Association. The posters tell the story of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and will remain on display during regular studio hours through the end of August.
The Continuing Nuclear Danger".
Panel discussion at the Olympia Center, featuring Bruce Gagnon, of the Global Network Against Nuclear Weapons in Space and Martin Fleck, of Physicians for Social Responsibility. Other possible speakers include Jackie Cabasso, of Western States Legal Center and Tom Grissom, of The Evergreen State College.

August 4 through 7
Volunteers will be present at the Olympia Farmers Market to provide outreach and offer children (and the young at heart) an opportunity to make paper peace cranes.

August 4 (Thursday)
David Krieger, Director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, will deliver a keynote address at the Olympia Center, titled "Confronting Nuclear Weapons: Where Do We Go From Here?". David is the author of ³Today is Not a Good Day for War², and will also read from this book of poetry at Orca Books on the afternoon of the 4th.

August 5 (Friday)
Local bands, The Carlysle Group, Back Porch Swing, and others, will provide an evening of music at Percival Landing to feed your soul and rekindle your fire to work for a nuclear-free world.
Some of the victims of the atomic bombings literally had their likeness burned into walls and sidewalks. Also n the evening of the 5th, these eerie shadows will be recreated throughout downtown Olympia. Chalk will be available for the community to join in.

August 6 (Saturday)
Second annual 24-hour peace meditation will be held at Tivoli Fountain on the Capital Campus. The focus of this year's meditation is on the continuing danger of nuclear weapons, with quotes of peace read on the hour.
The opening night of the beloved summer event, Olympia Outdoor Cinema will be co-hosted by the Beyond Hiroshima Coalition. A film short will start the evening featuring the story of Sadako and the peace cranes, a powerful story that children can relate to. Proceeds benefit efforts by the Beyond Hiroshima Coalition.

August 7 (Sunday)
A number of local churches will be devoting their Sunday services to the issues of peace and nuclear weapons proliferation.
Social Justice Committee Social Justice Film Series -- OUUC will host a powerful documentary titled "Hiroshima: Why the Bomb was Dropped" that explores why the United States used nuclear weapons on Japan. A facilitated discussion will follow the film.
Olympia Film Society -- 'Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Love the Bomb' is scheduled to show that evening at the Capital Theater.

August 8 (Monday)
Performance of Butoh dance will be presented at Heritage Park at dusk. Butoh is a highly expressionistic dance that initiated itself into Western consciousness as a response to the bombing of Hiroshima. Doranne Crable, faculty at The Evergreen State College, has designed this original work.

Augugst 9 (Tuesday)
Final evening of this series of events, citizens and members of the Olympia City Council will participate in a candlelight vigil to call for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the United States and other nuclear powers by the year 2020. This event will be part of a national effort involving cities throughout the country that have taken steps against nuclear proliferation.

Please visit www.beyondhiroshima.org for more information about any of these activities or to get involved.

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